

“THEIR SACRIFICE, OUR FREEDOM”

WORLD WAR II IN EUROPE

War in Europe Lesson Plans

Recommended Level: **High School**

Time Required: **5 Days**

Introduction

This unit covers the European Theater. Preceding these lessons, the students have covered the rise of dictators and identified Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin. These lessons begin with Hitler’s seizure of territories and end with V-E Day in Europe, and covers five days.

Part 1 of the video gives an excellent introduction or review of the steps leading to World War II. It is used as a review of foreign policy in the 1930’s through the Allied invasion of Africa and Sicily. Part 2 covers from D-Day to V-E Day and may also be used as an introduction or review. It is used as an introduction of U.S. troops fighting in Europe. Along with excellent video, eyewitness accounts and commentaries are presented by our veterans giving the added value of thoughts and details on what it was like to be there at that time and place.

Materials

- Video – *“Their Sacrifice, Our Freedom: World War II in Europe”*
- Internet resources
- Map of European Theater
- Art supplies and poster board

Unit Goals

After completing this unit, students will be able to:

1. Label and identify Hitler’s seizure of territories in 1930’s
2. Identify participants in the Munich Conference and understand the effects of appeasement.
3. Describe U.S. neutrality efforts in the 1930’s.
4. Identify Churchill and Roosevelt and the goals of the Atlantic Charter.
5. List effects of the fall of France on U.S. neutrality.
6. Describe terms and effects of Russian German Non-aggression Pact.
7. Label and identify Allied and Axis powers.
8. Have an understanding of Allied strategy to defeat Germany set-up at Casablanca.

9. Identify Allied and German military leaders.
10. Describe major battles in European Theater.
11. Hear eyewitness accounts of our veterans' experiences during the war.

Day 1

Aim:

The student will:

1. Understand how Hitler used fear, force and propaganda in taking over territory.
2. Locate territories and countries seized by Germany.
3. Locate Munich and identify participants and results of Conference.
4. Define appeasement and describe its effects.
5. Assign students to bring in poster board and art supplies for Friday.

Procedure:

1. In paired partners, brainstorm how Saddam Hussein or another modern dictator uses fear, force and propaganda to control his people.
2. Describe how Hitler used these tools, and his theories of race to control his people.
3. Examine German posters from WWII for examples of race propaganda.
4. Using text, identify territories and countries seized by Nazis.
5. On map, locate Munich and identify participants in conference and controversy over Sudetenland.
6. Define appeasement and its effects on Hitler and Allies.

Assessment

Create a time line of all important events in Hitler's rise to power covered in today's lesson.

Day 2

Aim:

1. Review U.S. foreign policy in the 1930's.
2. List and describe the Neutrality Acts.
3. Define "cash and carry".
4. Describe "lend-lease" after the fall of France.
5. Identify Churchill and FDR and their decisions made at the Atlantic Charter.

Procedure:

The student will:

1. Define and review isolationism. Discuss with students the contrast with today's foreign policy.

2. Using text, list the provisions of the Neutrality Acts of 1935, 1936 and 1937 creating chart as a response of actions before WWI.
3. Examine time line for events in 1939, and define cash and carry as a response to Germany's aggression in Europe.
4. List further changes in our neutrality as a result of Hitler's actions.
 - a. June 1940, Destroyer Base Deal and FDR's "bridge of ship"
 - b. January, 1941, Lend-Lease Act and "Arsenal of Democracy".
5. Identify British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and his role in the Battle of Britain.
6. Describe Churchill's decisions made with FDR at the Atlantic Charter, August 1941.

Assessment:

Create flow chart or time line to show progression of U.S. neutrality from 1935 to 1941.

Day 3

Aim:

1. Define and describe the Russian-German Non-aggression Pact and its effect on German policy.
2. Using map, trace invasion of Poland and Western Europe to Hitler.
3. Locate and describe Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and its effect on U.S.
4. Introduce video stressing value of eyewitness accounts and commentaries.
5. Present Focus Questions for video – Part 1, and show video – *"Their Sacrifices, Our Freedom – War in Europe"*, (17 minutes).
6. Discuss answers with class.

Procedure:

The students will:

1. Read to find out in their texts the term of the Russian German Non-aggression Pact and its effect on Germany: green light to attack Poland.
2. Do time line of Hitler's attack beginning with Poland through Western Europe and finally the Soviet Union.
3. Locate Pearl Harbor. Discuss effect of attack on American public and our neutrality. (An in-depth study of Pearl Harbor would be include in lesson plans on the Pacific Front which would be the next unit.)
4. Read focus questions before watching video. Watch video.
5. Do focus questions in paired partners.
6. Discuss answers with class.

Assessment:

List five questions you would like to ask our veterans after watching the video.

Other Activities:

Using Map of Europe, 1940, label countries of Europe. Color the countries as follows:

Nazi dominated countries - red; neutral countries – white; Allied countries – green

Day 4

Aim:

1. Using Map of Europe, 1940, set scene for Part 2 of video.
2. Locate three major battles: D-Day, Operation Market Garden, and Battle of the Bulge.

Procedure:

The students will:

1. Using map of Europe, trace Allied advances towards Germany locating;
 - a. Normandy beaches
 - b. Netherlands – Operation Market Garden
 - c. Ardennes, Belgium – Battle of the Bulge
 - d. Advance of Soviet Union from East
2. Fill in K-W-L chart about battles.
3. View Part 2 of video. Present focus questions for Part 2 of video.
4. Complete K-W-L chart.
5. Do focus questions in paired partners.
6. Discuss answers with class.

Assessment:

Divide class into 7 groups. Assign one of the following to each group: Munich Conference, Casablanca Conference; Atlantic Charter; Invasion of Poland and Western Europe; D-Day; Market Garden; and Battle of the Bulge. Using their text, commentaries and video, the students will work as a group, pairs or individually to write a letter home describing their experiences in the event or battle.

Day 5

Aim:

1. Creating posters to review important locations, generals, battles, dates and winners for European Theater.

Procedure:

Students will gather in their groups to create a poster for their event or battle. The following information must be on the Poster:

1. Title of event or battle
2. Large map of battle or country where event is occurring
3. Date
4. Allied generals of the battle; German, if possible (D-Day)
5. Pictures of people attending conferences
6. Short description of event or battle including significance
7. Letter written home from Day 4's assessment

Focus Questions – Part 1

Some or all of these questions may be presented as focus questions for students before watching the video.

1. How did World War I affect Germany?
2. Describe examples of Hitler using fear, force, and propaganda.
3. Describe the attitudes of our veterans towards the war.
4. Why didn't Britain and France do something to stop German aggression?
5. What was the U.S. attitude toward the war?
6. Why did Japan attack Manchuria and China?
7. Describe examples of Japan using fear, force, and propaganda?
8. How do you think our country reacted to the attack on Pearl Harbor?
9. How did our veterans feel about the preparation of our forces for fighting in North Africa?
10. What decision was made at the Casablanca Conference?

Answers:

1. Depression, war damages
2. Parades, flags, huge rallies, speeches, weapons, troops attacking
3. Not fun; never going to get killed, chaos, desire to serve; scared but do what you have to do; buddy doing the same; Lord watching over us; lucky
4. War didn't affect them, lost a whole generation in World War I
5. Neutrality; not our problem; stay out of it; not ready; small army
6. Greedy for more land
7. Waving flags; soldier with sword; attack by troops
8. Answers will vary

9. Guns not as good; tanks much less in range; troops inexperienced; Germans are much better
10. Churchill, Stalin and FDR decide to attack Sicily and Italy first. How does Stalin feel about it?

Focus Questions – Part 2

1. What are some of our veterans' memories?
2. What happened on D-Day, June 6, 1944?
3. Describe some of the problems our veterans faced on D-Day.
4. What was the job of the Dragon Wagon?
5. What was the job of the Red Ball Express?
6. What was the purpose of the English-led Operation Market Garden? Was it a success?
7. Describe Hitler's goal in the Battle of the Bulge?
8. How did the weather affect our troops in the Battle of the Bulge?
9. What are some of the messages our veterans want you to remember?
10. What is the advantage of being able to hear our veterans' eye-witness accounts and commentaries?

Answers:

1. Traveling on troop ships; practical training; praying and laughing on the way to D-Day; seeing officers shot down; landing out of their zone; bullets going through plane; being outnumbered.
2. Allied invasion of Normandy; Operation Overlord; German defense of Atlantic Wall.
3. Rope ladders going off the ships; almost drowned; getting to beach without helmet or gun; heavy gear (51 lbs.) weighed them down
4. Get disabled tanks and bring them back to base to be repaired.
5. Trucks brought supplies to troops on the front line (175,000 tons per day).
6. Take bridges in the Netherlands before the Germans could destroy them. Hold them until Allies got there. Failure – Germans got the plan.

7. Ardennes not defended well. No attack expected. Hitler's tanks and troops drive through American lines hoping to come around and attack the British from the rear. Hitler creates a huge bulge in American lines. Germans run out of fuel and the attack withers.
8. Planes were fogged in and not air support or supplies were given. Our troops had no winter uniforms or gloves in the coldest winter in years, so they suffered from frost bite.
9. Possible answers: War is hell. Freedom isn't free. Remember the sacrifices of our soldiers. I knew we'd win.
10. Answers will vary

MAP OF EUROPE, 1940



National Standards

History

- 7-12 Analyze the factors contributing to the rise of fascism, national socialism, and communism in the interwar period. (Analyze multiple causation.)
- 7-12 Explain the breakdown of the Versailles settlement and League of Nations in the 1930's. (Challenge arguments of historical inevitability.)
- 5-12 Evaluate American responses to German, Italian, and Japanese aggression in Europe, Africa, and Asia from 1935 to 1941. (Formulate a position or course of action on an issue.)
- 5-12 Explain the major turning points of the war and contrast military campaigns in the European and Pacific Theaters. (Draw upon data in historical maps.)
- 9-12 Evaluate the wartime aims and strategies hammered out at conferences among the Allied powers. (Hypothesize the influence of the past.)
- 7-12 Describe military experiences and explain how they fostered American identity and interactions among people of diverse backgrounds. (Utilize literary sources including oral testimony.)

English Language Arts

- 7. Students conduct research on issues and issues by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
- 8. Students use a variety of technological and informational resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

Pennsylvania Standards

Reading, Writing, and Listening - 1.1.11.A, D; 1.6.11.E; 1.4.11.B; 1.2.11.B; 1.5.11.A, B

Social Studies Standards – 8.1.12.A, B, C, D; 8.3.12.B